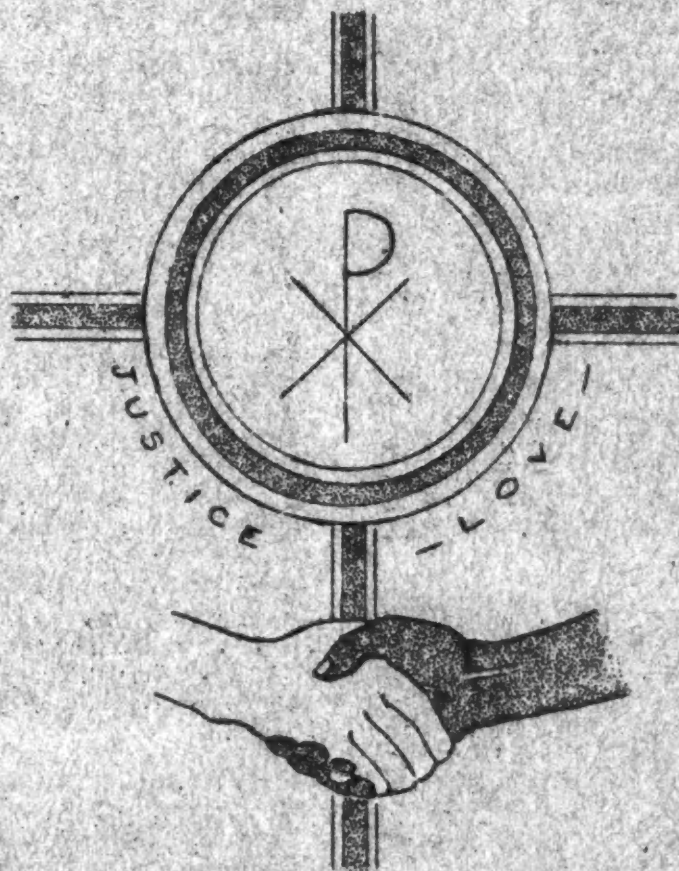


HARLEM Friendship House NEWS



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FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS
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STOCKTAKING

On February 14th 1942 four years will have passed since we came to Harlem. Today, at the threshold of a New Year, we feel like taking stock. But taking stock sounds so prosaic. You would hardly call our lovely, hard, breathtaking, mad adventure with God prosaic. Perhaps we had better call our stock-taking a rendezvous with memories.

Vivid, singing memories they are too..passing and re-passing on the screen of our minds and hearts like the love story they are. You see, the whole reason for each of us being in Harlem is simple. We fell in love with God.

Four years ago, how vivid that day is in our mind, we came to Harlem all alone with three dollars, a typewriter, a suitcase ...and a song in our heart. How warm was the empty room that the generosity of the Newman Clubs of greater New York provided for us on 138th Street ... right across from the St. Mark's Church.

It was at St. Mark's Church that we first met Blessed Martin de Porres, the great Negro Dominican Lay Brother who has since been one of our best friends, and who has helped us so much all along the way.

The first Negro CYO was born THEN. A group of youngsters, lovable, mischievous and gay...There were only a few. Today, there are many. There was only the room and the parish hall to meet in and plan and organize. Today, there are three Club rooms for our kids from the ages of 7-25....

THEN a few books rattled disconsolately on a little shelf by the door of our room, and were loaned over and over again to many readers. Today, a large cosy library with blue doors in honor of Our Lady, houses 5500 Catholic books and has four hundred and fifteen subscribers...as well as a Reading Room, well-patronized...

THEN the rod of the shower curtain, groaned under the weight of coats and dresses -- to give away to the men and women who crowded the little room. NOW the Cure D'Ars Clothing Center serves 250 people a week, under the smiling eyes of St. Vianney, himself.

We feel sure that our one room had rubber walls the way they expanded, for people used to sit on the frigidaire, and the sink, for the Open Forums and Study Club meetings. Now, the Library again provides them with ample space for open Forums and meetings. Almost nightly some group is meeting to discuss phases of Catholic Action, some truth of the Faith, Cooperatives and Credit Unions, The Liturgy or Social Reconstruction according to the Popes.

Harlem was a very lonely place THEN! We knew so few people ... for we were a complete stranger from Canada. Today, to all of us, Harlem is home, a friendly place where one cannot walk a step without being hailed with a smile and a cheery "How are you today" ..where kids run to one, trustfully, and old men and women smile from the stoops where they are trying to catch a bit of sunshine.

Many of our friends balked at the idea of our moving onto 135th Street because they said that it was the worst street in Harlem. But we staunchly argued that it was the very place our Beloved Holy Ghost would want us to be, for the need there must be greater than elsewhere. Today, our library and clubs have changed the physical aspect of 135th. The blue doors, in honor of Our Lady make a bright splash in the midst of colorless tenements. And our Police Captain from the 135th Street says that juvenile delinquency in this area has been reduced 14 per cent since we moved in. We knew the Holy Ghost wouldn't let us know.

We can't call these blessed memories "STOCK-TAKING". How could we? They are so vivid so alive, so glad, so mad, so gay, so sad ... these singing happy memories of our glorious adventure with God.

STAFF REPORTER

Dear Friends of Friendship House:-

Next month, we are going to have a surprise for you. Last Wednesday, we took the subway downtown and went to see a printer. Before the afternoon was over, we had learned all about ten point print, mats, and mastheads. We had to learn about them, because starting with the February issue, we shall print FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS. It will be a pocket-size edition of a regular newspaper.

We must confess that we are a little sorry to see our colorful mimeograph sheet go. We had lots

of fun pasting up a primitive dummy on yellow scrap paper with home made galley sheets. And every month we had lots of fun deciding what color paper we should use, and what picture we should run as a cover. But, "time marches on," and those days are gone forever. Next month, FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS will go to press.

The reason we are writing you a letter this month instead of our regular column is to ask for your assistance. We should very much like to have you write and tell us some of the phases of life in Harlem that you are particularly anxious to learn about. We also would like to know if you think we should change the name of our paper. FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS is what it has been in the past. In the future, we should like it to be a 'blood and thunder' mouthpiece for Interracial Justice. We, also, want to stress the Laity's position in Catholic Action. We want to talk about our technique in social work with the Negro -- which, after all, is no technique, but rather a full understanding of the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of Christ.

We, also, will welcome, in the future, manuscript of approximately twelve hundred words on subjects relative to our work. We are not able to pay for manuscripts, but seeing your ideas in print even without pay is sometimes most satisfactory.

So, next month about the middle of February, your mail-man will leave a brand new type of FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS in your box. Please write and tell us how you like it. We are open to all suggestions.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Kay Jardo

THE BARONESS JOTS IT DOWN

"Where is the green paper...what have you done with the engine... Someone find me some red string" Madonna Flat, the habitat of the Staff girls of Friendship House, looked like the workshop of Santa himself.

Betty forgetful of the dignity of her twenty-three years and recently acquired M.A. in Social Sciences was sitting on the floor, wrapping parcels in gay papers. A smudge decorated her nose, but her big brown eyes were shining, for she was preparing the Christmas party for sixty CYO Cubs, our youngest group...who are little angels, with devilish mischievous ideas, who were going to have a "Christmas Tree and everything".. as one of them put it.

Mary Jerdo, our business manager and Staff reporter on this LITTLE PAPER, was standing in the middle of the library, with a slightly dazed look on her face enumerating what had to be done..."Now let me count again" she was saying somewhat stammeringly, as one who has difficulty in concentrating.." The 6000 Christmas cards are on their way out Friendship House News for December is almost ready for mailing. The donation book needs checking, and "thank you" cards have to be sent out. The new names must be entered. Candies must be wrapped for 150 kids of the CYO Generals, the High School group, who are going to have their party in our Parish Hall with a Christmas Tree, carols, and all. Yes, the presents for them ... now what was it? Oh yes, an American flag pin that has to be wrapped in green paper, and candies in red. No, it's the other way around.... Where in the world is that electrician for the lights and what about that party for the office girls....ice cream....cakes.....Oh boy, where was I".....

Flewey, our librarian, artist, mimeographer, and what have you ...who has been with Friendship House since 1933, an old timer! ...was staggering in with heavy loads of mimeographed sheets.. Carols had to be done..The last page of F. H. NEWS was giving trouble. The ink was running over, this was evident, for her hands and face must have received their share of the same... She was being torn from her painstaking work every two minutes by our friend, the Negroes, who needed food and help of all kind, and naturally went to her for it.. She being the keeper of the keys as it were ... No wonder though happy, she looked tired and drawn.

Marie Cepican, of our Clothing Room had the hardest place of all. In an unending stream, the R. R. Express Wagons, and Uncle Sam's mail trucks were stopping in front of the clothing Center disgorging parcels, and cartons... ..all filled with gifts of clothing from every part of the U. S. A. from our generous friends. These packages to be distributed, to a staggering line of waiting, patient people. From early morning till all hours of the night she worked like a Trojan. Never complaining, always with a smile on her face... for wasn't she as all of us serving Christ in the Negro, and on His birthday too!!

Bob Lax, our latest addition to F. H. Staff, a writer, formerly on one of New York's outstanding Magazines, was finding his first week with us tremendous, to say the least. From pounding a typewriter, he had graduated to pushing a cart, one moment loaded with card board and paper for the junk-man, and the next moment with toys to take to the Colored Sisters' Nursery and Kindergarten. Then he was off again to the Post Office with parcels to be mailed, or Christmas cards to be dispatched.

In and out he wove, between the street and F. H. until exhausted. Evening found him collapsed on a couch sleeping beautifully.

I was trying to hold on to the last shred of common sense, and make myself into quintuplets. Counting families to be given baskets, answering the continually ringing phone, and seeing that all the parties had everything that a party should have. Arranging the Christmas Tree in the Library for the Mother's Club. Greeting an unending stream of smiling visitors. Writing as many letters as I could in answer to a mail that reached thru the Christmas tide, the immense proportions of a thousand letters in two weeks, counting the financial donation, and trying to keep check of who sends how much. And all of this was taking place in a bedlam of noise and constant interruptions...

Work, hustle and bustle, seeming chaos, yet on the whole great order, noise and laughter ... and happiness in all faces. This is Friendship House the week before Christmas ... And, all this is possible because YOU our friends, all over the U.S.A. have made it possible, by your charity that knows no bounds, your understanding of the need, that is so profound.

WE ARE BUT YOUR HANDS..YOU GAVE ALL THIS HAPPINESS TO THE PEOPLE OF HARLEM THRU FRIENDSHIP HOUSE HAPPY BLESSED AND HOLY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL...WE KNOW YOU WILL HAVE IT...FOR YOU HAVE FULFILLED HIS COMMAND... "WHATSOEVER YOU DO TO THE LEAST OF MY BRETHEN, YOU DO

TO ME..." YES YOUR NEW YEAR WILL BE A BLESSED ONE AND WE ALL JOIN IN THANKING YOU DEEPLY FOR YOUR HELP....GOD BLESS YOU ALL AND MAY OUR LADY, COVER YOU WITH THE BLUE MANTLE OF HER LOVE AND KEEP YOU THERE....

WE NEED...BADLY...PLEASE!!!

Francis, Our new staff member, from St. Louis, is working with the C.Y.O. Cubs, and definitely means business. She told us that since we are daughters of Saint Francis of Assisi, we had to beg ...or he would not be happy. Well, we love St. Francis so here we are!

For her Craft Classes, we need:

Ropes -- old, small, large. Old gloves ... pocketbooks .. leather. Tin cans, coffee, and ordinary cans. Scissors -- all kinds and shapes. Celluloid, your old tooth brushes, soap dishes. Glass frames and funny shaped bottles from perfume...wine, and vinegar. Hammers and tools -- all kinds and sizes. Empty spools. All kinds of embroidery cotton, silk, and cotton thread. All scrapes of old and new materials, unbleached muslin, old and new cotton curtains. Wire-- All kinds -- copper and otherwise, wire baskets (old) and wire files, etc. Tape -- rick-rack braid, - cotton batting. Funny sack...bur-lap. Felt penants. Paints--house, water colors, oil. Clothes pins. Wooden beads. Tools -- all kinds.

AND A LARGE LOOM IF YOU HAVE ONE TO GIVE AWAY...THE CIVIL DEFENSE ADVISES YOU TO CLEAN ATTICS AND CELLARS ... SEND THEIR CONTENTS TO US! WE WILL MAKE USE OF EVERYTHING....THANK YOU!



HOLY COMMUNION

"What light will, in those eyes, like an archangel
Soon stand armed,
You who have come with looks as lowly as the shady valleys,
And kismet as weak as lepers on the step of Bethlehem?

"Although we know no hills, no country rivers,
Here in the jungles of the waterpipes and
iron ladders,
Our thoughts are quieter than rivers,
Our loves are simpler than the hills,
Our prayers are deeper than the sea.

"What wounds had furrowed up our dry and fearful spirit
Until the massbells came like rain to make them vineyards?
Now, brighter on our mind's bright mountains
Than were the towns of Israel,
Is our desire!

"Because Grace moves like wind the armies of the wheat,
our secret hero,
And Faith sits in our hearts like fire and makes them
smile like suns

"O Glory, be not swift to vanish like the wine's light
savor.
O still lie lightly, Truth, upon our tongues
When we come back from Bethlehem,
To burn down Harlem with the meek Word of the Savior".

TOM MERTON

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